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TAGS: PREL PGOV ETRD LH EUN AF

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY GAERC: LITHUANIA FOCUSED ON KOSOVO,  
AFGHANISTAN, SETTING STAGE FOR MARCH COUNCIL

REF: SECSTATE 13840

Classified By: Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Rebecca Dunham for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Lithuania's FM does not plan any interventions for the February GAERC, but is supportive of U.S. positions. In the lead-up to the GAERC, Lithuania focused on Kosovo, Afghanistan, and setting the stage for a March European Council that focuses on the Lisbon strategy and the energy sector. End Summary.

¶12. (C) We delivered reftel points to Tomas Gulbinas, head of the MFA's Common Foreign and Security Policy Division. Gulbinas told us that Lithuania's primary concern during the February GAERC was setting the stage for the European Council discussion on energy security in March. So far, Gulbinas said, it appears that the German presidency is very aware of Lithuanian concerns. Gulbinas said Lithuania was pleased with the European Neighborhood Policy discussion last month and is planning to engage in a large discussion of ENP at the March 20 Gymnich.

Kosovo

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¶13. (C) Gulbinas told us that there is no consensus on the GAERC conclusions on Kosovo, and that Foreign Ministers would likely go into the GAERC without having reached consensus in Political and Security Committee. Some countries have issues with Ahtisaari's recommendations, and want the conclusion to "welcome the presentation of the recommendations" rather than "welcome the recommendations," with which they take issue. Although Lithuania will ultimately support the recommendations, and would support even clearer independence for Kosovo, they too have "questions" because the document purports to recommend something short of total independence but nevertheless allow Kosovo to gain membership in international organizations.

MEPP

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¶14. (C) Gulbinas welcomed the February 2 Quartet meeting as "some sign of hope." While Lithuania is not a vocal actor in the EU on MEPP issues, Gulbinas did acknowledge the preference for European engagement via the EU and not the Middle East peace initiative vetted by Spain and France in November.

Iran

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¶15. (C) The EU will debate extending EU sanctions against Iran further than that required by UNSCR 1737, which Gulbinas called the lowest common denominator. Lithuania will support stronger sanctions against Iran in EU structures. According to Gulbinas, the Foreign Ministers will also discuss

balancing sanctions and engagement with the government of Iran.

Afghanistan

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¶6. (C) On Afghanistan, Gulbinas told us the ministers will formalize what is already agreed to in working groups, a police training program under the auspices of ESDP. As the Lithuania-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghor, Afghanistan concentrates primarily on police reform, Lithuania is pleased by the EU initiative and has actively supported it from Brussels. Gulbinas also mentioned that EU money for projects are part of the same initiative and would benefit Lithuania's PRT directly.

KELLY